

**COUNCIL AND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**  
**JOINT MEETING**  
**Monday, March 4, 2013**  
**Council Chambers**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
Minutes of Meeting

Mayor Lecklider called the meeting to order.

Present:

*Council Members:* Mayor Lecklider, Mrs. Boring, Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher, Mr. Gerber. (Mr. Reiner arrived late.) Mr. Keenan and Vice Mayor Salay were absent.

*Planning & Zoning Commissioners:* Ms. Amorose Groomes, Ms. Newell, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Fishman, Mr. Hardt, Mr. Budde and Ms. Krumb.

*Staff:* Ms. Grigsby, Mr. McDaniel, Mr. Foegler, Ms. Readler, Mr. Hartmann, Ms. Mumma, Mr. Hammersmith, Mr. Hahn, Ms. Cox, Ms. Willis, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Phillabaum, Mr. Goodwin, Ms. Husak, Ms. Ray.

*Consultants:* Darren Meyer, Principal, MKSK; Chris Hermann, Principal, MKSK, Brian Kent Jones, Jones Studio Architects; Paul Endres, EndreStudio.

**I. Introduction**

Ms. Grigsby stated that tonight is a follow-up meeting to the Joint Session on January 17. At that meeting, discussion related to making the Scioto River Corridor the first focus and looked at the opportunities and challenges with the river corridor. Tonight's meeting will provide more detail regarding infrastructure needs, and specifically, how it could tie into the private development.

**II. Background and Meeting Objectives**

Mr. Foegler stated that the emphasis of the last meeting was on orienting everyone to the development site, including the key assets along the corridor; detail on the priority public projects; issues that should shape the urban design and planning framework, as they moved forward; park configuration; and pedestrian bridges.

Tonight's meeting goals are:

1. Design Framework Ideas. Develop the design framework ideas and better understand the nature and extent of the opportunities. These areas are now informed with significantly more private developer input, as there are key sites in this location that either developers own or developers have the options to purchase. They have dovetailed their planning to allow the City's efforts in this area to align, so that what the team puts forth has some semblance to the anticipated development.
2. Public Improvements. There is much more definition to some of the public improvements in the project area. With an explanation of what has driven staff's thinking on those, Council and the Commission can provide feedback. There is a clearer understanding of the relationship of those public investments -- both to one another, potential domino effects according to the order in which they occur, and their ability to be catalytic to private development opportunities adjacent to them.
3. Public Improvement Costs. Staff will share early estimates of the anticipated costs associated with these public projects, as well the resulting private investment that could occur in this corridor and the team's assessment of the most critical public investments necessary to unleash the opportunities. Based on tonight's discussion, it is hoped the City will have a better framework for guiding private development decisions and designing and prioritizing its public investments.

### **III. Scioto River Corridor Urban Design Framework**

Darren Meyer, MKSK, stated that since January, their goal has been to add more details to the framework. To orient their view of the discussion area, he provided a slide giving an aerial view of the subject area -- 80 acres of the river corridor. He provided a view of a potential build-out of the area, noting that nothing is final; it is only shown to add clarity to the vision. As they looked at potential "bits and pieces," an overall view developed. To better look at the whole in context, they have developed a rendering of that potential build-out. In this rendering, there are a few proposed roads and bridges, changes in what is located on the parcels, and different configurations.

#### **A. East Side**

##### Riverside Drive

Riverside Drive is the lynchpin piece on the east side. It has impacts on future parkland and private development. There are engineering issues related to capacity, safety and movement on Riverside Drive, specifically its major intersections. The challenge is how to make Riverside Drive a parkway -- a road within a park -- as it is adjacent to a new park on Riverside Drive. At the last meeting, they shared a view of Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, where there is a gracious, wide boulevard adjacent to development, and discussed how Riverside Drive compares to that development. Riverside Drive is a 40-mph road, likely will be as it redevelops, and there is a certain nuance that relates to that speed. There is a need for sufficient buffers to provide comfort, but have building store fronts close enough that they appear alive and vibrant. The challenge is having a road that operates at that speed adjacent to a park.

They looked at Riverside Drive from different angles in a preliminary way, including engineering, cut and fill costs, utilities, intersection distances and sight line distances. They also looked at several scenarios related to how Riverside Drive relates to the new Riverside Park. One of the driving reasons for the realignment of Riverside Drive is to create some real estate on the east side of the Scioto River in order to create a park.

##### Roundabout

This is at the intersection of SR 161 and Riverside Drive. A potential roundabout at this location has been studied for a number of years with the goal of addressing capacity and safety issues at that intersection. Other alternatives have been considered, such as signalization, but the current thinking is that a roundabout would be the best way to address a number of complex issues related to this intersection. As the engineering and development of the roundabout proceed, important considerations are how it relates to adjacent development in terms of access from the intersection and its character.

There are a number of interior streets on the east side. Several developers have looked at different sites in that area. It will be a distinct advantage of the City to have the resources in place to keep its thinking current and up to date with the speed that the developers are moving. It is a credit to the planning foundation that has preceded this that the current market seems to be closely aligned to the direction that resulted from the established Vision Plan. The roadway network should have roads that create neighborhood, walkability, access for both pedestrians and drivers to shared community resources. These will evolve as the private development planning continues. Because the City planning and private development planning processes are moving hand-in-hand, the City will be able to gain the most leverage from private

development sites and the most civic benefit from the public infrastructure that will be put in place.

#### Vehicular Bridge

There is the potential for a future vehicular bridge in addition to the Bridge Street bridge. The current thinking is that the addition of a vehicular bridge at the terminus of John Shields Parkway would be adequate to serve future traffic functions.

#### Parks, Greenspace and Civic Spaces

In this area are two smaller park spaces. One is a neighborhood green off Mooney Street that runs north-south between Riverside Drive and Tuller Ridge. Another is a greenspace that has come from previous planning efforts, which is along John Shields Parkway. It is a greenway that connects in various ways to Sawmill Road on the eastern edge of the City. It is a critically important link in terms of bringing the various, emerging neighborhoods on the east side to the river and the heart of Dublin.

The big park space, which is presently called the Riverside Park, will be created primarily from the realignment of Riverside Drive. What exists there today is native vegetation and the river valley, which are very beautiful, although inaccessible. The City wants to capture and incorporate that into whatever development occurs there. Those factors should remain consistent in any view of the park. In addition to that, there is the need to create some usable land along the Riverside Drive grade. This should stimulate the adjacent private development as well as provide a general civic benefit to the community. They found in a number of their previous projects with cities that there is a direct correlation between a well-designed, well-maintained public greenspace and adjacent real estate value. Private development teams have indicated that is a tool that they utilize to help market their products. At the previous joint meeting, there was robust discussion regarding potential park elements. There is not sufficient time within the scope of this study to undergo a full programming and design process for the park. However, they would like to identify a few key things that, at a minimum, the park should accomplish:

- Have some flexibility. In comparison to previous alignments for the park, the current acreage has almost doubled, in terms of the flat, useable greenspace, distinct from the steep, wooded slopes. In addition to the size of the park, they have looked at the developable ground on the east side of Riverside Drive, which would be influenced by any realignment of Riverside Drive.
- Key components of the park:
  1. Development of trails north and south along the Scioto River that connect to other public greenspaces, both in the water (recreational craft) and on the land (recreational trails).
  2. Pedestrian bridge. Currently, because of lack of real estate on the east side, there is very little room for a bridge to land. That is a key factor, due to the volume of pedestrian traffic that may be generated and the uses that may be adjacent to where the bridge lands.
  3. Some of the present, invasive vegetation can be thinned, and vistas/views of the river can be opened up that are currently wooded and overlooked.

#### Comparison with Other Riverfront Parks

Two are downtown, riverfront parks in Columbus. Genoa Park, which is in front of COSI, is 4.1 acres. It successfully supports a number of festivals and activities. North Bank Park, further north along the river, is 5.2 acres. As well as "Red, White and Boom," this park functions for daily activities for the residents and supports major civic events. Next in terms of size would be this Riverside Park, as currently proposed. The acreage of 12.5 acres is not final, but there will be sufficient real estate to accomplish future programming. Another local park is Ballantrae Park that contains 18 acres.

#### Potential Private Development

Creating a framework plan entailed working with private developers on sites in play and also looking at the potential of other sites within the study area. The team has developed some numbers that reflect the size of the potential only; they do not represent any specific development proposals.

#### SR 161/Riverside Drive

There are two very different areas in which private development is considered. Historic Dublin on the west side is complex. New development must fit in with the existing historic architecture, have smaller footprints for smaller sites, and parking is an issue not easily solved, due to the tight sites and narrow streets. The east side is different, partly because it is not as heavily developed. It is more of a greenfield site, although bedrock can be an issue, but there is more ability to work with how developments are laid out on the sites.

Focusing on the area north of SR 161/Riverside Drive, there is a density on the east side that is greater than the west side. That is beneficial for a number of reasons. Riverside Drive does carry a large volume of traffic. The architecture adjacent to that road needs to hold that edge. Drivers need to be aware that this is an urban, mixed-use and pedestrian environment. The density on that side creates a 21<sup>st</sup> century downtown perception. Throughout this corridor, they have looked at mixed uses, which include office space, retail and residential. They also explored the opportunity for a limited service hotel. The SR161/Riverside Drive intersection could benefit from a strong, architectural landmark.

Brian Kent Jones, Jones Studio Architects, added that, in addition to the scale of the park, they are looking at its civic character. There is little opportunity to reinforce that edge with the new urban expression along this new roadway system. Therefore, wherever a bridge lands – whether it is pedestrian or vehicular -- an attempt is made to make that an iconic gateway experience. Literally, these bridges become bridges from the "old town" to the "new town."

Mr. Meyer stated that north along Riverside Drive, there would be mixed-use development that has retail and office on the first two floors and the potential of up to four floors of residential above. They have looked closely at the area from Riverside Drive up to the buildings, including front doors, retail store fronts and outdoor dining. They believe that there is a design solution that can make that compatible with Riverside Drive and that marries those. Because there is a park on the other side of Riverside Drive, the intent is to make Riverside Drive feel like it is in the park. The desire is to make the buildings with the retail below and residences above all feel as if they are in the park. There are some rich opportunities for designs that can make that happen, because they believe those components can be compatible. One of the benefits of the density is the fact that because structured parking would be part of the solution, there is an

opportunity on the east side to avoid service parking lots. One of the desirable aspects of Columbus is its near-downtown neighborhoods. Grandview Heights, Italian Village, Victorian Village and German Village have a density that service departments do not like because those roads are difficult to navigate, but there is a wonderful sense of urban neighborhood. Dublin has a wonderful opportunity to achieve that, if it can accomplish a structured parking solution. That would provide the ability, moving east, to look at attached products – townhomes and row houses, which, through an aggregate of those on Riverside Drive and those units east of it, could be a dense urban neighborhood. There is diversity in types of products. Historic Dublin compared to the proposed footprint on the east side reveals the opportunity to create subdistricts or areas of character.

Mr. Jones added that they have worked on a neighborhood launch project on Gay Street. The expression of an urban neighborhood could occur up the hill, as they, too, would have little pocket parks.

Mr. Meyer showed various proposed viewsheds looking north across the river. Mr. Jones noted that the curvilinear design of the pedestrian bridge aligns with the existing Dale Drive road system on the east side of the river, which will be anchored by modernistic buildings. The architectural icons are not intended to express a dictated architectural vocabulary, but will attempt to establish goals relative to that place. In addition to a landing for the bridge, they have looked at program components for the park that are retail and service in nature.

Mr. Taylor inquired if the elevations on each end of the bridge are equal with a raised Riverside Drive.

Mr. Meyer responded that they are within five feet, and the bridge span is very flat.

Mr. Meyer stated that the last view on the east side is from the new park looking south – some development on the left side is shown, the river on the right. The road is nestled between the height of the density on its east and the parkland on its west.

## **B. West Side**

The real estate explored on the west side is less than on the east. No new roads are proposed on the west side, but three streets will receive a different level of traffic and may need to be upgraded to accommodate pedestrians and street parking. The area of 94 and 100 N. High Street will receive some great frontage, which will begin to pull the historic edge north. As that happens, the City will want to look closely at how the road serves that frontage. There are some issues at the North and High intersection that need to be addressed. In looking at the potential for a pedestrian bridge that lands at North Street and at Dale Drive – do we consider a pedestrian-only phase at those signalized intersections? Is there a preferred way to accommodate a great volume of pedestrian traffic moving through there? Currently, North Riverview Street has a public component that runs south and terminates at Bridge Street; moving north, it is a private drive that leads down to parking lots that serve 94 and 100 N. High. As the development of the Riverside Park begins, it will be important to create frontage on that greenspace. Whenever one has civic, community, public space and public parks, it is essential to provide public frontage for those with convenient and understandable public access. As 94 and 100 N. High Street develop, at some point in the future, it will be necessary to look closely at North Riverview in regard to how to provide public frontage along the new riverfront park.

The Riverside Park on the west side has a different character than on the east side. It is wooded and naturalized with low, flat areas and floodplain areas. Only limited park improvements would happen in that area – additional access to the river, access to trails, connection of the pedestrian bridge landing at North Street into the park. Primarily, this will be a scenic, naturalized park area and developed with a light hand.

There are a couple of parcels that they are looking at in terms of an urban framework. The North Riverview project, which is further along in the process, is a mixed-use project, running from Bridge Street after entering Historic Dublin. It will have retail, restaurant and office, as well as some residential. There is also 94 N. High Street, which has a similar mix of uses. They also looked at 100 N. High. One of the options they explored was a future site for the Dublin Library branch. They have had several discussions with Columbus Metropolitan Library Executive Director Pat Losinski and his team. However, the City's development efforts are further advanced than the Library's, in terms of being able to make definitive decisions. Internally, they have been discussing the model for the Library. It is viewed as an urban model for the Library. There may be a structured parking component and multiple stories. Currently, the Library is evaluating issues related to their obligations to serve their patrons – whether that is best accomplished by a suburban or urban model, and the best location. The Library is now engaging consultants to assist them. Unlike the east side of the river area, there is a cap to the development potential of Historic Dublin, due to the limited development parameters of its historic character.

### **C. East Side-West Side Connection**

Mr. Meyer showed an aerial view of the east side area from 1957 and a comparison 2013 view. This site has remained largely undeveloped during this time, but the desire now is to unlock that development. The pedestrian bridge provides tremendous potential to do that. There is a benefit from the two proposed landing sites – North Street on the west side of the river and Dale Drive on the east side. It is logical to assume that the east side would develop without the pedestrian bridge, but in discussions with private developers and market analysts, there is a sense that the pedestrian bridge would be a strong component in retail viability, although retail has struggled in that general area to date. It will be strong component if the residential density that can be achieved. It will have an effect on both sides of the river, supporting the existing businesses in Historic Dublin with the density on the east side of the river.

Paul Endres, EndreStudio, presented an overview of several bridges depicting how well they can integrate into the urban fabric. These included:

1. Providence Bridge, Rhode Island -- seamlessly integrates with the urban area
2. Sundial Bridge, northern California - a community of 84,000 residents, with a depressed downtown area. After the bridge was built, a neighboring museum had an increase of 42% increase in attendance. The bridge attracts more than 1M visitors per year to the community, bringing in more than \$1M in annual economic revenue.
3. Shoreline Bridge, San Francisco Bay – joins two City parks. It was built under high-tension lines, previously a blighted area. The bridge has now become an icon, an identifier for the surrounding neighborhoods.
4. Liberty Bridge, Greenville, South Carolina – The outside edge is supported by a suspension cable, but the inside edge is completely free. It has an iconic tower form and a bridge deck that is lit under the handrails. It is a special bridge. It is lifted up vertically on the outside edge. That acts as a horizontal arch, so the top surface of the bridge

deck pushes to the right. Several feet below that is a cable that pulls to the left. That rights the twisting force of the bridge being lifted up only on one edge. There are currently only five of these in the world, and only one in the United States. It is about 345 feet long, 12 feet wide, and cost about \$1,000/square foot for the design of the bridge.

For the design of Dublin's pedestrian bridge, they first approached it from an economic standpoint, looking at the number of towers needed. Because the elevation of the bridge surface from the ground below is 30-40 feet, the number of towers is critical. They looked at three-span, four-span, two-span arch concepts, but primarily, at a single tower concept, because it has less material. They looked at three different types of single towers with straight or S-shaped alignments. The S-shaped alignment seemed to fit more naturally with the City's urban grid. Eventually, they focused their time on a single-tower suspension bridge with an S-shaped alignment. In keeping with Historic Dublin, the material would be concrete that would have a texture that is similar to the stone that is found in the historic neighborhood. The single tower design is teardrop. Below the deck, there is an arch form that integrates with the historic arch form of the Bridge Street bridge. They have tried to keep the new bridge consistent with the existing historic fabric in form, materials and texture. However, in three dimensions, this bridge is definitely not traditional. The single tower, suspension bridge is part of the ring cable family, as is the Greenville, SC Bridge. This bridge would be the longest ring cable bridge in the world. The ring cabling provides very minimal structure so it is a more economical type of bridge. The bridge deck would be lit, producing a light effect over the water. The tower would be seen from the Historic District, I-270 and neighboring streets. It would be lit at night, and in time would become an identifiable element for the City of Dublin.

#### **D. Enabling Projects and Costs**

Mr. Meyer stated that one of the goals of this work session was to identify a logical sequence for how the private and public projects work together, identifying any enabling projects that need to occur first, and which projects would be catalytic in driving and stimulating private development and generating the greatest civic benefit for the City of Dublin.

##### Catalytic projects:

Certainly, Riverside Drive is an incredibly important piece for this in terms of establishing the character for the east side, allowing Dublin to have the real estate to create the park on Riverside Drive and providing a great landing for the pedestrian bridge. The span of the pedestrian bridge is significant, nearly double the length of the Liberty Bridge in Greenville, SC. – 700 feet across the river is a significant distance to cross. They have looked at the value of creating an experience with that crossing, more than just a utilitarian movement. What should be done at either end of the bridge that would be exciting and encourage that movement? This is one part of how Riverside Drive is addressed, and it includes the intersection where the pedestrian bridge ties in. The pedestrian bridge has great benefits in terms of the viability of the development in that area -- strengthening the core of the Historic District and the riverside park itself. It will be important in creating a core civic signature City space at the heart of the Historic District, bridging the gap between the historic downtown and the new, dense development on the east side. They have depicted that pedestrian piece extending all the way up to I-270, with the idea that it could go both north and south through trail connections in the future. There are also a number of supporting public projects that will help move things ahead

– projects on North Riverview, High Street and on some internal streets. These appear to be some of the most catalytic in driving development forward.

#### Enabling Projects

In terms of enabling projects, there is a sequence, as well. The relocation of Riverside Drive unlocks the ability to look at the pedestrian bridge and its landing. The riverside park is intertwined with both of those.

They have taken a quick look at the economic potential for the east and west side, what the public improvements and public investment may support – a long-term vision. It is very encouraging to be looking at these numbers with professionals and consultants to give realism to the vision.

#### **IV. Discussion & Next Steps**

Mr. Foegler stated that their goal tonight was to convey the unique opportunity that Dublin has here. The amount of potentially developable land in the core of a suburban city that has grown as much as Dublin has grown in the last 40 years is really extraordinarily rare. Those real estate parcels are located adjacent to the City's greatest natural asset – the river, and provide a unique opportunity. This opportunity is also coming into alignment at the right time. These kinds of projects presented to developers five years ago were not as readily accepted, but now, it is the kind of opportunity developers are seeking. There is a convergence of developer and market interest, which is partly driven by the demographics –the young professional, empty-nester segment of the market is seeking this type of development. The sheer array of housing types that would be provided here, that are either not provided, or only in a very limited fashion in the City today; the volume provided and the quality of the environment they occur in; and the efficiency of the land use with which this is done is remarkable. The traditional amount of infrastructure that would have been necessary for this type of development, done in a typically suburban way would have required a massive amount of acreage, roads and other improvements.

Many things still need to be completed with the analysis. They need to assess the public-private partnership opportunities in much more detail as well as understand the TIF analysis and structured parking. They have begun that analysis and want to incorporate their conclusions into their final report. The City Manager, Finance and Council will need to assess the financial resources in regard to when projects will happen and the capital planning implications in doing them. In the timing of opportunities, there is a need to consider markets and financial conditions. There are some things happening with multi-housing developments, and the ability to fund some of these development types may be a limited window.

Although much of this area is a greenfield site, there are also areas of redevelopment, which provide a different set of challenges. There is the need to assess Library opportunities within this geography. All of the affected stakeholders must be fully engaged in this process, as the planning efforts proceed.

#### Discussion

Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher stated that she likes the continuation of the development of the River Corridor – it is beginning to take shape. She has a number of questions.



1. She particularly likes the teardrop bridge concept. Many in this group have visited Greenville, SC so are familiar with their bridge. As the photos show, the Greenville environment around their bridge differs from the environment in which Dublin's bridge would be located, although some of that environment is presently hidden and unknown. She was pleasantly surprised at the cost estimates of the bridge. Compared to downtown Columbus and the Scioto Mile area in front of COSI, what is the width of Dublin's river versus the river area in downtown Columbus?

Mr. Meyer responded that the river in Dublin is narrower for a very short distance. As Council may be aware, Columbus is considering removing one of its low-head downtown dams in order to restore a more natural watercourse. Dublin's bridge crossing area is narrower. Dublin is probably one/half or less of that in the downtown area.

2. Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher stated that she recently became convinced that it would be best to talk of the "beginning" of the Scioto in Dublin and the ending in Columbus. With the anticipated recreational opportunities, there will also be an opportunity to build that excitement and market it as a brand that brings together the central community of this region. She believes it is helpful to consider it in that context. Although there will be significant differences, there is still a bridge concept with a pedestrian element at both the beginning and end of it.
3. She noted that the City has been in discussion with the Columbus Metropolitan Library for several years, and the City understands the priorities for their system. Do we have a sense of a final timeframe when the Library will be able to make a decision concerning their Dublin site? This has significant influence on this project for the City, and the City wants to incorporate them into this area.

Mr. Foegler responded that he spoke with Mr. Losinski last week regarding this effort. The City has a clear understanding of some of the issues they are attempting to weigh. From a timing perspective, the City wants to be certain that all of the reasonable opportunities in this section of the Corridor have been vetted. That vetting will take place fully over the next 30-60 days. If there is an opportunity that can be pursued further, it should be identified. If this area is incompatible with the type of the site the Library is seeking and the project they want to advance, the City has committed to immediately considering other site opportunities.

4. Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher asked what population increase is anticipated within the proposed residential areas.

Mr. Foegler asked Mr. Moore about the number of units/bed count in the total build-out.

Mr. Moore responded that they calculated slightly less than 1,500 units in the full build-out.

Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher inquired what person per unit ratio used.

Mr. Moore responded that it is a mix of one and two bedrooms, and expected to be 1.2.

Mr. Foegler stated that number will be further developed within the next 30 days. The denser, taller housing product along Riverside Drive is anticipated to be a young professional type of housing with a mix of one and two bedrooms. The townhomes and attached product further east will bring different opportunities. They are just now initiating engagement with the developers, so he hesitates to provide numbers that aren't informed by the market assessments underway.

5. Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher stated that she supports changing the architecture substantially on the east side of the river. It would require educational efforts to gain support for that change, and that effort would need to be directed by professionals. Could this transition

in architecture be accomplished in a manner that avoids the appearance of two different cities – east and west of the river? Typically, when a person leaves an adjoining community and enters Dublin, they are aware of the fact that they have entered Dublin.

We want to ensure that in this area the same demarcation and recognition is in place.

Mr. Meyer responded that the consistent factor between the Historic Dublin side of the river and a different type of architecture on the east side would be the grain – the width of the bay, the store front and the pedestrian texture would be consistent and reflect the hallmark of Dublin development.

6. Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher asked with the next iteration, will Council have information about the timing for the move of Riverside Drive.

Mr. Foegler responded that there will be more detail in the final report, including cost estimates, projected timeframes for design/implementation, land acquisition, etc. The anticipated date for the final report is April.

Mr. Reiner stated that he believes the illustrative presentation is very well done. The team has met Council's objectives and included many of the ideas that they have formed over the last five-six years. The two things of interest to him now are the City's ability to raise the funds needed and the realistic potential for private investment.

Mr. Gerber stated that he also is very impressed with the illustrative presentation. Likewise, his concern now is the economics, as the plan moves forward. What analysis has occurred to date, and will continue, regarding the interest of developers? Do developers believe there is a market for this development, and will it be financially feasible for them? It is one thing to have a great plan, but it must also be commercially viable.

Mr. Meyer responded that they are asking those same questions.

Mr. Foegler stated that they are benefiting from having engaged private developers in this process. They have been very open with regard to the pro forma and development costs. The City's finance staff is evaluating what level of City participation is necessary to make those things happen. The intent is to clarify that as much as possible in the final report, but it will, of course, be ongoing as these projects move forward.

Mr. Hermann added that they have heard from developers that the park along Riverside Drive and the pedestrian bridge being done by the City is a "game changer" for them – not only are they interested in development, but in significant development.

Mrs. Boring stated that she also finds the presentation very impressive. Last evening, she viewed a TV documentary concerning a housing bubble in China – houses built but not occupied. How can Dublin avoid that?

Mr. Hermann stated that the street network and walkability of this framework provide the ability to accommodate changes in the market. Currently, there is a market for higher density residential products, but developing this future grid pattern will allow the City to respond to the market as it changes. Most critical is that the edge of Riverside Drive area be done well, and then the development will fill in behind it.

Mr. Foegler stated he also viewed the program on the housing issue in China, but he believes that the market-based nature of financing in this area provides assurance. Residential or commercial projects will be financed and move forward based upon vacancy rates. The market will self adjust, and development opportunities will be financed accordingly. The City will assess how it will partner to take advantage of those opportunities.

Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that Planning & Zoning Commission's "charge" is not the financial aspect, and therefore the Commissioners will focus on other types of issues. In one of the slides, the greenway was depicted, yet it did not align with the pedestrian bridge and was considerably to the north.

Mr. Meyer stated that if they are not aligned yet, one will move. The pedestrian bridge was positioned to land in the core of the Historic District on the west and within a nucleus on the east side, as it is contemplated today. That may change, however. The greenway connection may be revisited. Crossing Riverside Drive will be difficult, but they will make the at-grade crossings as pedestrian-friendly as possible. There has been some discussion about the possibility of an underpass at some point along Riverside Drive.

Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that although this discussion is too early to discuss details, she would be in favor of adding a second greenway because the pedestrian bridge seems to be located appropriately. There will need to be two passageways between the east and the west sides.

Mayor Lecklider asked if an underpass is being considered, how would they propose to do this, in view of the river rock.

Mr. Meyer responded that it would be challenging, both the process and the high cost of financing. However, it merits consideration in order to compliment the at-grade crossing.

Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that the acreage for the park on the east side was provided, but not for the park on the west side.

Mr. Meyer responded that it is a little over nine acres on the west side, from Bridge Street to Indian Run, and 12 acres on the east – for a total of over 20 acres.

Mr. Hermann noted that the land behind 94 and 100 North High is privately owned and those properties run all the way to the river. That area is shown as part of the west side park, but it would have to be part of a redevelopment agreement for those sites.

Ms. Amorose Groomes noted that in the visit to Greenville five years ago, they noticed that the Greenville pedestrian bridge did not land in an active area. She is pleased that Dublin's proposed bridge would be active on both sides.

Mr. Taylor stated that he believes the illustrative presentation is magnificent and the pedestrian bridge is beautiful. The flowing shape seems natural and organic. The building elevations are amazing. They use the scale, texture and flavor of Historic Dublin without repeating it. It is something new and different, yet it fits. He does believe that the western landing of the pedestrian bridge should extend further into Historic Dublin. As shown, both ends of the bridge end at the streets, but something is needed to carry it further -- perhaps a greenway on the east side, or maybe an urban version of a greenway on the west side. It would be desirable to recognize that one is on a path to the bridge before one actually sees the bridge.

Mr. Fishman stated that he is confident that adequate traffic studies will be done. He is concerned about cooperation with Columbus, as Dublin will be directing a lot of traffic into Columbus and receiving a lot of traffic from Columbus. He is really concerned about the Sawmill Road/Columbus edge of this project. This will require cooperation with and participation from Columbus. What is the projected timeline for completion? That information would be important to developers.

Mr. Foegler stated that Planning staff can provide more background concerning the greenspace, and its connectivity to the east, and the existing parks that have already driven this alignment. This, in fact, is part of the Vtable negotiations – the right to purchase the greenbelt as shown on the illustration. The goal is to create very desirable, walkable streets. At the key connection points, it will be necessary to “go the extra mile” with regard to walkability in the areas in which traffic will be distributed in the east and west. The timing has not been determined. A number of factors will drive that. The project begins with a fiscal analysis, in terms of what the City is willing to do and the commitments it is willing to make in the near versus long term. Some of those fiscal commitments are directly impacted by the value of what is being built, how much tax increment financing income will be generated, and the type of arrangements with the school district. Certain housing types may allow the City to do more. For the quality of development that is proposed for the east side, the City will have to make a series of commitments toward those three catalytic elements in order to make that happen. They will continue to assess how everything can be phased. He cannot determine when the total build-out would be or how long the market will take to absorb some of these elements, but there are developers who want to move very quickly on certain aspects of this project and these aspects could be transformational. They will continue those discussions, incorporating the input provided tonight, and move toward implementation frameworks.

Mr. Fishman inquired about a very rough time estimate of timing for the pedestrian bridge – a few years or decades?

Mr. Foegler stated that the key to the timeframe for the bridge is the relocation of Riverside Drive. If that occurs quickly, then so could the bridge. There must first be a park for the bridge to land in, and some good development should be occurring around those landing sites in order to have a park worth visiting. They are attempting to identify the catalytic projects, how they relate to one another, and what it means in terms of land assemblage and traffic. Engineering is developing a model that looks at how the incremental projects should be timed and their impact on sections of the overall system. Staff acknowledges that Council and Planning Commission have a desire to advance some of these initiatives as soon as possible. It is a very big and bold vision, unlike anything else that is occurring within the nation at this level, in a suburban context. However, Dublin has an extraordinary series of assets and opportunities aligning that can allow significant pieces of the vision to move forward quickly. However, it is first necessary to resolve some of the phasing challenges.

Ms. Grigsby stated that these discussions are helpful to Administration. Staff is continuing to refine the numbers, develop better financial projections with various TIF scenarios, and evaluate the City's position with current tax revenue reserves in the CIP. The Bridge Street District projects will be considered in the next five-year CIP update.

Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher stated that 40 years ago, Dublin had a bold vision, and Jack Nicklaus, Ashland Chemical and the I-270 construction helped the City move forward. Almost 50 years later, there is again an opportunity to take a bold vision, and with bold leadership pull together the entire community – government, corporate and residential, to participate through support, ideas and finances.

Mr. Fishman stated that he agrees. Real estate tends to run in cycles and it is important not to miss the cycle. Secondly, the City does not want a bridge that goes nowhere. He is interested in a timeline because trends change and cycles come and go.

Mr. Hardt stated that the designs shown tonight are impressive. He shared the following concerns:

1. Wants assurance that the change in architecture on the east side of the river is compatible with that on the west side.
2. Concerned with the site of the western landing of the pedestrian bridge, and the greenbelt alignment.
3. Connectivity of the pedestrian paths and bikeways along the river. If that area of the community is disconnected, it will not benefit the City.
4. The roundabout was not listed among the three catalytic projects, but is it feasible to relocate Riverside Drive without building a roundabout?

Mr. Meyer responded that it is feasible, but that does not mean the City won't consider doing both at the same time.

Ms. Kramb stated that she has had many inquiries about Dublin's plans for the Bridge Street District. When she indicated there would be a park, the response from many people of varying ages was why did Dublin need another park and how would it be different? The idea of a pedestrian bridge made it more appealing. Several expressed a strong interest in access for canoes and kayaks, indicating that they would use a park with kayak access all the time, and if it were easy to cross the river, they would want to live in housing on the east side. It is important to make this park different from Dublin's other parks to justify the major investment.

Mr. Budde noted that the joint group previously discussed having multiple footbridge landings on both sides of the river, including the concept of footbridges extending over Riverside Drive rather than a pedestrian tunnel.

Mr. Meyer responded that a tunnel is expensive, but it is difficult to make a footbridge over the road ADA compliant and have sufficient clearance over a state route. An at-grade crossing may be more feasible.

Mr. Budde stated that he doesn't understand the point of constructing a roundabout with the ability to move all that traffic through the intersection, only to stop the traffic 300 feet north of it at a traffic signal.

Mr. Meyer stated that he believes the traffic signals were also considered critical to allow for traffic movements into the retail and residential areas.

Mr. Budde pointed out that there are above-street walkways in downtown Columbus, at Nationwide Boulevard and High Streets.

Mr. Meyer responded that it is an option worth exploring.

Ms. Newell stated that:

1. She finds the pedestrian bridge component the most exciting. For a long time, she has been interested in having a foot traffic connection from one side of the river to the other. Dublin's park system is one of its most valuable assets. It has been valuable in encouraging good development and a good environment for residents. The once small, individual neighborhood parks are now becoming interconnected and an essential fabric of the community. The pedestrian bridge ties together the total vision for the City's interconnected park system.

2. Old Dublin has been "where it is" for a long time. Its street names – Bridge Street and High Street, are historically significant. During those early years, those were the names given to streets in all communities developing along a river. The pedestrian bridge across the river moves the focus away from Historic Dublin. It is almost equal distance past Bridge Street where the development of Historic Dublin is located, so the question is how to keep that without changing the focus to the pedestrian bridge. Although the development on the other side of the river can be very different, she believes that a little of what exists in Historic Dublin should be carried over into the first development of the east side to avoid creating the appearance of two different communities. They will compete against each other, and one will suffer.
3. What thoughts have been given to how this could expand and impact development west from Bridge Street to along SR 161 to I-270?

Mr. Meyer responded that there have been longer term discussions with respect to the status of the school and other properties along that route. Those discussions for that area have not involved any detail at this time.

Ms. Newell asked if there is any concern about existing Old Dublin being very negatively impacted by this project. Given the speed at which development will occur on the east side and the pedestrian landing on that side, Historic Dublin businesses may not be able to survive.

Mr. Meyer responded that he believes that the young professionals attracted to living in the east side development will be attracted to the authenticity of Historic Dublin. His sense is that what has happened and is happening in Historic Dublin will be the "kernel" around which all this new development grows. Residents of the 1,000 units on the east side will want to cross the river and eat at the Historic Dublin restaurants.

Mrs. Boring added that some older, 50 plus people like that environment and energy as well. Wouldn't this type of housing also suit that population demographic?

Mr. Meyer responded that would be part of the target group.

Mayor Lecklider stated that the description of the pedestrian bridge, the park, and the relocation of Riverside Drive as the catalytic elements makes sense. It is difficult to envision these features, but the depictions of the pedestrian bridge this evening exceeded his expectations. He can see how that would be a "game changer" to the private development community. He has the opportunity to follow up on all the good comments made by others tonight.

1. The pedestrian bridge landing to the east is a concern to him, as well. The impression most of the group who participated in the Greenville, SC tour came away with was that their bridge was transformational. The potential here is limitless.
2. With Riverside Drive, the desire is to move traffic efficiently, potentially with a roundabout. He believes that the issue is more about changing expectations. He is not sure he is ready to change his expectation, which is that there is no need for vehicles to move through this area at 40-50 mph. This will be a different place, and hopefully, it will be the kind of experience, driving through, that will make a driver want to slow down to enjoy it. The comment was made about the efficiency of putting in a roundabout, and then a traffic signal 300-400 feet to the north to accommodate a pedestrian crossing. He believes that is a valid concern. Hopefully, expectations can change with respect to this strip of Riverside Drive.
3. River accessibility. He believes this is very important -- not only the views that can be offered, but also the accessibility of the river. This is something that is limited

downtown. There are more opportunities here, and also to the north, for that access to be emphasized.

5. Financing and long-term viability of the entire plan. Build-out could occur in 30-40 years, and significant activity could take place in the short term. The impression from some discussions that occurred during the Greenville trip was that they had debt issues. Although he agrees with the earlier comment about the positive results 30-40 years later should Dublin take a bold step and the transformational possibilities of this project, he does not want Council's legacy to be one of leaving its successors constrained by unmanageable debt.

Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher asked if the intent is for a third meeting. If so, what will that agenda include?

Mr. Foegler stated that this is the last scheduled joint work session. To bring closure to this phase, we committed to an expedited process. The intent is to have a final product in April. A significant piece of the State of the City presentation will be on Dublin looking forward, which will introduce these new ideas. In terms of the next phase of discussions, he would like to continue the financial discussions, including implementation, feasibility and impact on the City's long-term fiscal health. Over the next 30-60 days, they would like to advance the information in regard to items that will inform capital planning decision. Private developers are investing very significant resources in their planning efforts. Part of what is now being seen in east side developments reflect plans that are very consistent with what they had before the City drafted its first elements. We are not misaligned with private developers.

Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher stated that the City is aware there are some viable development opportunities and people interested in moving forward. She is concerned about telling them to wait, as there is only a window of opportunity, both for the City, the developers and the banks. How does the City move forward with what is desired while the plan is being finalized?

Mr. Foegler responded that, hopefully, the group tonight sees tremendous progress from the status just 30 days ago. All of the pre-planning that must occur before the actual projects take place is occurring. The City does not own the real estate to move and relocate Riverside Drive. Properties have to be assembled and acquired to do so, and businesses and property owners would be impacted by those. It is important to be thoughtful, engage stakeholders along the way, and understand what is feasible with regard to this. The challenge is trying to understand more clearly how things can be phased. For projects that can be moved forward, are there ways to accomplish and secure the level of commitment developers will be seeking? Some things move forward as there is more TIF revenue to fund more public improvements. Currently, they are working to align their view and vision, understand the development concepts and densities and advance the planning. They will have more information on how some of these projects can move forward in the very near future.

Mrs. Boring stated that often it takes a significant period of time to complete a project after it is approved. If Council indicated today their desire to have the pedestrian bridge done as soon as possible, how long would the entire process take?

Mr. Foegler responded that the process would involve acquisition of the real estate to relocate Riverside Drive, designing the Riverside Drive project, building that project and designing the bridge while the first project is being built. Separate from the real estate acquisition process, he will ask Mr. Endres to estimate a timeframe for the bridge and Mr. Hammersmith to estimate engineering and construction time frames for this type of road project.

Mr. Endres stated that, assuming the design was occurring simultaneously with the land acquisition, it would take approximately two years from the time that the acquisition and design were completed to construct and complete the pedestrian bridge.

Mr. Foegler asked him to estimate the design time frame.

Mr. Endres responded that the average design time is about one year. Construction would be staged for a certain time of the year, and it would take approximately two years for the construction process.

Mrs. Boring inquired about any downside to Council giving direction to proceed with the design. Mr. Foegler responded that it would first be necessary to design the road. He believes that what Council needs from the consultants and staff is an entire strategy for implementation that relates to real estate acquisition, design and implementation. That is the information that they hope to have in the final report.

Ms. Chinnici-Zuercher stated that it was her understanding that Council had already directed staff to proceed with the design for the Riverside Drive relocation.

Mr. Foegler responded that all the preliminary engineering has been done, but the formal engineering design is a separate process, which involves a budget request and formal approval. That process will define more clearly the rights-of-way and property impacts. It is fairly clear from these scenarios the general impact on property that is not City-owned, so staff will bring to Council some strategies regarding land acquisition.

Mr. Gerber stated that the Bridge Street Corridor Plan and Code have already been adopted. It is his understanding that a concept plan has already been submitted for 94 North High Street. Where are those projects in the process? Is the current planning process delaying those development plans?

Mr. Foegler responded that it is not. The 94 N. High Street owner is still exploring development opportunities. The original concepts shared with this group assumed integration of 100 N. High, but that has not occurred. At this point, separate opportunities are being considered. The Gerry Bird project to the south has been initiated in the internal process. More formal action on that will occur. The projects on the east side are being pursued with developers who have real estate under contract with contingencies. The City has been able to assist those projects in their design process by contributing the services of MKSK and has advanced and expedited those efforts. It has been possible to have their design team and the City's design team fully engaged on that effort.

Mr. Gerber inquired the anticipated timeframe for initiation of the first project.

Mr. Foegler responded that that the most project-ready proposal is Gerry Bird's project. Discussions have been initiated with staff. These are very involved partnership agreements. If a framework is established, then, depending upon financing, development ideas should line up quickly. With the City's performance of the public improvements, fiscal concerns addressed, and the appropriate strategy, these projects could move quickly. However, there are significant financial implications that this group needs to fully understand.

Mayor Lecklider asked when the final report would be provided.

Mr. Foegler responded that the final published report is expected in mid to late April. That will develop as the urban design framework for this section of the District. It will meet its objective



of providing far more definition to the public improvements as well as the private development in this area.

Mayor Lecklider asked if there would be a final meeting to discuss that report.

Mr. Foegler responded that he would like to bring strategies for review and engagement for moving forward to the next Council meeting. Tonight is the last workshop scheduled for this effort.

Mayor Lecklider thanked the consultants and staff for their presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

---

Clerk of Council